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BRIAN HENDERSON

## Two Types of Film Theory

Philosophers often find it useful to classify theories bearing upon a problem according to some typological scheme. In *Five Types of Ethical Theory*, C. D. Broad treats Spinoza, Butler, Hume, Kant, and Sidgwick not only as moral theorists but also as examples of basic approaches to the subject. In a final chapter Broad includes these and other theories, actual and possible, in a comprehensive classificatory scheme. Similarly Ogden, Richards, and Wood, in *The Foundations of Aesthetics*, advance a schematic outline of the principal approaches to aesthetics. Why such schemes are helpful is not hard to see. For one thing, they bring order to the otherwise unmanageable number of theories in fields such as ethics and aesthetics. In order to be useful, however, classification must also be accurate, and this means that a good typology of theories embodies a good deal of analysis. Before one says that two or more theories are fundamentally—not just apparently—similar or different in this or that respect, one must have penetrated to the base of the theory, to its generative premises and assumptions. One must also know intimately how the theory gets from these to its conclusions and applications, so as not to be misled by the latter. This analytical work, as well as the classification scheme which is its completion, are helpful, finally, in the criticism and evaluation of the theories themselves, thus preparing the way for new theoretical work.

A classification of film theories stands on different ground than those in more developed fields. Whereas typological schemes in ethics and aesthetics grow out of an abundance of theories, a classification of film theories faces a paucity of positions and the fact that most of the possible approaches to the subject have

not been explored. Moreover, whereas classifications of philosophic theories usually concern not fragments of theories or attempted theories, but only fully complete approaches to the problem, it is possible that there *has not yet been* a comprehensive or complete film theory.

The underdevelopment of film theory, however, may itself be a reason for close analytical work, including a classification scheme of the principal approaches already taken. It is also incontestable that new theoretical work is needed: the development of cinema since the late fifties is far beyond the explanatory capacities of the classical film theories. Either new developments are seen in old terms or—more often—the attempt at theoretical understanding is not made.

The careful review of older theories is part of the spadework necessary for the formulation of new theories. Just as film art is stimulated by ploughing back the work of the past, so film theory may be stimulated by ploughing back the thought of the past. The limitations and weaknesses of older theories reveal paths to be avoided just as their achievements reveal, cumulatively, the problems and doctrines that a new theory must take into account.

The principal film theories that have been developed are of two types: part-whole theories and theories of relation to the real.\* Examples

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\*These theory-types are neither new nor unique to cinema. Part-whole theories and theories of relation to the real (sometimes called imitation theories) have had a long life in the history of aesthetic thought generally. Through the eighteenth century these were the principal, most widely held approaches. See Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present*

of the first are those of Eisenstein and Pudovkin, which concern the relations between cinematic parts and wholes; examples of the second are those of Bazin and Kracauer, which concern the relation of cinema to reality. Our examination of these two theory-types will limit itself to Eisenstein and Bazin. Theirs have been the most influential film theories, arguably they are also the best, and—in essential terms—they are probably the most complete. Theirs are also the theories closest to actual films and based on fullest knowledge of cinema history. Closeness to subject does not guarantee a good theory; in the cases of Eisenstein and Bazin, however, it insured that the theoretical concerns of each were nearly always those of cinema itself.

The focus of this article is less the truth or falsity of the theories discussed than the theories themselves. It examines not the relation of theories to cinema but their operation *as theories*. Thus behind our typology of theories lie larger questions: What is a film theory? What are its necessary features? What does it seek to explain?

The real is the starting point for both Eisenstein and Bazin. One of the principal differences between them is that Eisenstein goes beyond the real, and cinema's relation to it, and that Bazin does not. It is obviously of primary importance to determine precisely what each meant by the real: since this term is the theoretical foundation for each, it determines in some degree everything that comes after it. In fact, however, neither theorist defines the

real nor develops any doctrine of the real whatever. To some extent in each the resulting theory is built upon a foundation that is itself an unknown. Concerning cinema's relation to the real, both Eisenstein and Bazin are far clearer.

For Eisenstein, as for Pudovkin and Malraux, pieces of unedited film are no more than mechanical reproductions of reality; as such they cannot in themselves be art. Only when these pieces are arranged in montage patterns does film become art. Eisenstein states this doctrine repeatedly, perhaps most succinctly in the following formulations;

*"Primo:* photo-fragments of nature are recorded; *secundo:* these fragments are combined in various ways. Thus the shot (or frame), and thus, montage.

*"Photography is a system of reproduction to fix real events and elements of actuality. These reproductions, or photo-reflections, may be combined in various ways."*

(*Film Form*, page 3)

*"The shot, considered as material for the purpose of composition, is more resistant than granite. This resistance is specific to it. The shot's tendency toward complete factual immutability is rooted in its nature. This resistance has largely determined the richness and variety of montage forms and styles—for montage becomes the mightiest means for a really important creative remolding of nature."* (*Film Form*, page 5)

Elsewhere Eisenstein speaks of "combining these fragments of reality . . . into montage conceptions" (*Film Form*, page 5). Defining cinematic art in this way requires one to reject uncut pieces of film, what we would call long takes, as non-art; and this Eisenstein does. He refers to:

*" . . . (T)hat 'prehistoric' period in films (although there are plenty of instances in the present [1929], as well), when entire scenes would be photographed in a single,*

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(New York, 1966) and *Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (New York, 1958). It suggests the backwardness of film theory that they are still the principal approaches in its field. Neither in aesthetics generally nor in film theory are part-whole theories and theories of relation to the real necessarily or always inconsistent. One task of analysis—perhaps the chief task—is to determine where competing theories are inconsistent, where they do not conflict, and where they are positively complementary.

uncut shot. This, however, is outside the strict jurisdiction of the film-form."

(*Film Form*, pages 38-9)

"In 1924-25 I was mulling over the idea of a filmic portrait of *actual* man. At that time, there prevailed a tendency to show actual man in films only in *long* uncut dramatic scenes. It was believed that cutting (montage) would destroy the idea of actual man. Abram Room established something of a record in this respect when he used in *The Death Ship* uncut dramatic shots as long as 40 meters or 135 feet. I considered (and still do) such a concept to be utterly unfilmic. [135 ft. = approx. 2½ min. at silent speed.]

(*Film Form*, p. 59)

Whereas Eisenstein only mentions the real then hurries to other matters, Bazin discusses at length cinema's relation to it. Like Eisenstein, however, Bazin neither advances a theory of the real nor defines it. Even his theory of cinema's relation to the real is put not explicitly but through a series of metaphors, each with a slightly different theory. Seeing the theory in operation, in "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema," gives a surer sense of it than Bazin's metaphoric definitions. Applying his theory to cinema history, Bazin contrasts "directors who believed in the image" with "those who believed in reality." Image directors "added to" the object depicted by editing techniques and/or plastic distortion (lighting, sets, etc.). A "reality" director, such as Murnau, "strived to bring out the deeper structure of reality" and "adds nothing to reality, does not deform it." This style exhibits, in Bazin's revealing phrase, "self-effacement before reality." In defending composition-in-depth, Bazin says: "The spectator's relation with the image is nearer to that which he has with reality." Elsewhere Bazin speaks of the "supplementary reality" of sound and, more generally, of cinema's "vocation for realism."

In "The Ontology of the Photographic Image," the being in question is not that of nature or reality but that of the image itself. Bazin

is inquiring into the nature of the image and finds that the image shares in or partakes of the real. The precise nature of this partaking Bazin essays in several formulations:

"(T)he molding of death masks . . . likewise involves a certain automatic process. One might consider photography in this sense as a molding, the taking of an impression, by the manipulation of light." (p. 12)

"[The photographic image resembles] a kind of decal or transfer." (p. 14)

"Let us merely note in passing that the Holy Shroud of Turin combines the features alike of relic and photograph." (p. 14)

"The photograph as such and the object in itself share a common being, after the fashion of a fingerprint." (p. 15)

"The photograph as such and the object in itself share a common being"—Bazin never makes it clear what he means by this, though he gives the concept several formulations:

"The photographic image is the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it. No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discolored, no matter how lacking in documentary value the image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it *is* the model." (p. 14)

"In spite of any objections our critical spirit may offer, we are forced to accept as real the existence of the object reproduced, actually *re-presented*, set before us, that is to say, in time and space. Photography enjoys a certain advantage in virtue of this transference of reality from the thing to its reproduction." (pp. 13-14)

"Photography affects us like a phenomenon in nature, like a flower or a snowflake

whose vegetable or earthly origins are an inseparable part of their beauty." (p. 13)

[Bazin hedges his doctrine here by casting the discussion in terms of the *psychology* of photography, how we react to it rather than (strictly) the nature of its image; but Bazin does not stay within these bounds—the essay's title is finally controlling.] Though he seems to do so at times, Bazin never does identify object and image. Where Eisenstein seems to merge them (the film piece is *itself* "a fragment of reality") Bazin keeps them distinct, though he makes the image dependent upon and inferior to the real—not only at its birth but throughout its existence. For Eisenstein, on the other hand, the film-piece's connection or identity with reality is de-feasible: that bond is severed or dissolved when the piece is combined with others in montage sequences.

For Eisenstein, the only way that pieces of film can overcome their "unfilmic" status as mere "fragments of reality" is by combination into montage patterns. Through this nexus alone, filmed reality becomes art. Thus much of Eisenstein's theoretical writing is devoted to the various kinds and methods of montage association. He devotes considerably less attention to the kinds of artistic units—greater than the shot, less than the whole film—which these montage associations form or constitute. What sort of unit is the montage combination? The word that Eisenstein usually uses for this intermediate formal entity is the sequence, but he never develops a doctrine of the sequence nor discusses the sequence as such and indeed seems not to acknowledge it as a category of his film theory. It enters through the back door, as it were, for want of a better term/concept; though Eisenstein sometimes uses it as a term of accepted meaning and common usage. It appears thus in an early essay, "The Filmic Fourth Dimension," in which it is italicized as though a technical term and then, without definition, slipped into the discourse and used again and again (in this essay and others). The sequence, that is, the montage sequence, is in fact a central category in Eisen-

stein's aesthetics, though an unacknowledged and unanalyzed one. At times Eisenstein discusses methods of montage and other association categories without reference to the sequence, as though entire films were built out of them directly. Of course this is not true, as viewing an Eisenstein film makes clear: each of his films proceeds by way of narrative blocks or segments, each of which is composed of one or more montage sequences. Indeed, when Eisenstein discusses his own films he frequently falls into this usage also, referring to the "fog sequence" of *Potemkin*, the sequence of the gods in *October*, etc. Sometimes he uses alternative phrases, "a fully realized montage composition," "a film fragment," as synonyms for "sequence," but the structural concept and its indeterminacy remain the same.

Eisenstein's short essay "Organic Unity and Pathos in the Composition of *Potemkin*" creates additional puzzles regarding the sequence and the intermediate formal units between shot and whole film generally. Eisenstein proffers an elaborate analysis of *Potemkin* as a tragedy in five acts, including such classical machinery as a caesura, golden section construction, etc. Eisenstein's breakdown of the acts makes clear that they are composed of several sub-events or sequences. It would seem, therefore, that shots—in various montage patterns—make up sequences, and sequences in turn make up larger parts or areas or acts and these in combination make up the entire film; but to these intermediate formal entities Eisenstein devotes almost no analytical attention at all.

It is of the greatest importance that Bazin's critique of montage is in fact a critique of the montage sequence; and that the alternative to montage which he advances is consequently another kind of sequence. Bazin speaks of montage film-makers as dissolving "the event" and of substituting for it another, synthetic reality or event. "Kuleshov, Eisenstein, and Gance do not show the event through their editing; they allude to it. . . . The substance of the narrative, whatever the realism of the individual shots, arises essentially from these (editing) relationships; that is to say there is an abstract

result whose origins are not to be found in any of the concrete elements." (p. 27) In speaking of Flaherty, Bazin says:

"The camera cannot see everything at once, but at least it tries not to miss anything of what it has chosen to see. For Flaherty, the important thing to show when Nanook hunts the seal is the relationship between the man and the animal and the true proportions of Nanook's lying in wait. Editing could have suggested the passage of time; Flaherty is content to *show* the waiting, and the duration of the hunt becomes the very substance and object of the image. In the film this episode consists of a single shot. Can anyone deny that it is in this way much more moving than 'editing by attraction' would have been." (p. 29)

In regard to Welles, too, Bazin defends the substitution of the sequence shot for the montage sequence.

"Anyone who can use his eyes must realize that Welles' sequence shots in *The Magnificent Ambersons* are by no means the passive 'recording' of an action photographed within a single frame, but that on the contrary this reluctance to break up an event or analyze its dramatic reverberations within time is a positive technique which produces better results than a classical breakdown of shots could ever have done." (p. 39)

In these passages Bazin idealizes the sequence shot but he does not insist on it. The sequence shot is the perfection of the long-take style or tendency, but there are other possibilities. For instance, Bazin defends Wyler's use of a repeated inset shot within a long take (in *Best Years of Our Lives*) as a kind of dramatic "underlining." (I disagree: fundamental values of the long take are lost or diminished by such interruptions/insets.) A more common variant on sequence shot Bazin does not discuss—the use of two or more long takes to make up a sequence. How the shots are

used, particularly how they are linked, present interesting theoretical problems. Such considerations belong to a comprehensive aesthetics of the sequence and of the whole film—something neither Eisenstein nor Bazin provides. That is, such problems take us beyond the present, into the realm of a new film theory.

The sequence is as far as either theorist gets in his discussion of cinematic form. The film theory of each is in fact a theory of the *sequence*, though neither Eisenstein nor Bazin nor both of them together contain or achieve a complete aesthetic even of the sequence. The problem of the formal organization of whole films, that is, of complete works of film art, is not taken up by either. This is the most serious limitation of both theories. Both Eisenstein and Bazin contain fleeting references to whole films, and Eisenstein a short essay, but—what is crucial—both discuss the problem of wholes in literary not cinematic terms. Thus *Potemkin* as a tragedy. Bazin, more incidentally, speaks of the cinematic genres of the Western, the gangster film, horror film, etc.: it is these which govern the whole film and hence determine the nature of the sequence which in turn calls for a certain choice of treatment. It is at this point that Bazin's film theory enters. Bazin has definite ideas concerning how the sequence, so determined or given, might best be treated or realized. These film genres, as well as the older genre of tragedy, of course have literary origins. Consider the importance of this: after the most technical and detailed discussions of shot and sequence—in *purely cinematic terms*—both theorists veer off into literary models for answers to the ultimate (and arguably most important) question for film theory: the formal organization of the whole film itself, of the film *as film*. In fact the answers Eisenstein and Bazin give avoid this question rather than answer it. Their solutions in terms of (pre-cinematic) literary models are a failure to take up the problem at all.

The above raises the difficult problem of narrative and film form's relation to it. Put crudely, it is possible to analyze cinema in either per-

spective, formal or narrative. That is, one can consider each category—shot, sequence, whole film—in terms of narrative (sometimes present) or cinematic form (always present) or both. Eisenstein and Bazin discuss shot and sequence primarily as cinematic form, not narrative. Why narrative should then emerge as the central or sole category of analysis at the level of the whole film—when it has not been an important category at lower levels—is not clear. In fact Eisenstein and Bazin subtly shift ground at this level; they turn to another problem as though it were the continuation of their initial one. They consider shot and sequence in terms of cinematic form and then the whole film in terms of literary models and do so as though treating a single problem from start to finish. They write as though formal parts added up to or constituted a narrative whole. Indeed, this seems not far from the traditional view: cinematic form in shot and sequence serve or realize story or content.

We have been concerned primarily with exposition of the theories under examination; it is now time for analysis of them. Our focus here is the way the theories are put together, how they operate as theories, what their internal dynamics are. Our inquiry will concern, among others, these questions: What is the cause of the failure of Eisenstein and Bazin to consider the formal organization of entire films? Is it internally determined by the premises of each theory? How does each define cinema as an art? What are the relations in each theory between the two essential terms of cinema (as art) and the real? How does the real affect or condition film as art and how does film as art relate to the real?

Both theories start with the real; from this common point the two diverge sharply. The choice or move that each theory makes just beyond this point is crucial for its entire development. As noted, Eisenstein breaks with the real in order for film to become art. It is montage, the arrangement of film-pieces, which transforms them from “fragments of reality” into art. There is a logical or ontological prob-

lem or gap here: the real on the one hand and the finished film-work on the other, with only a nexus of arrangement between. To bridge this gap Eisenstein emphasizes again and again that montage is (or involves) a qualitative alteration of the film-piece itself. “The result is qualitatively distinguishable from each component element viewed separately,” “the whole is something else than the sum of its parts” (*The Film Sense*, p. 8). To get the same material from non-art to art, montage had to be given magical, almost alchemical powers. Eisenstein undoubtedly indulges in mystification here. The problem could be avoided if Eisenstein would admit that unedited film pieces were already art in some sense, if lesser art, or that they might be in some circumstances. But this is what Eisenstein cannot allow. If the uncut shot could be art then montage would not be necessary for art—the long take and long-take styles could be art also. Eisenstein must make montage the sole nexus to film art—that is the strategy of his theory. Put another way, Eisenstein is not content to accept montage as his aesthetic preference and to advance reasons for its superiority; instead he must ground his preference for montage in an ontology, in the nature of things, to insure its exclusivity as film art. This leads Eisenstein to certain other distortions also. To emphasize montage he must de-emphasize the shot and its categories of artistry; composition, lighting, actor placement, etc. Eisenstein can hardly deny the importance of these so he tries to assimilate them to his theory of montage in various ways. Thus the shot is a montage cell; that is, the smaller unit is explained in terms of the larger. At other times Eisenstein emphasizes the unstructured reality of the shot, calling it “more resistant than granite” and referring to its “complete factual immutability.” Thus Eisenstein plays down also the careful planning and preparation of shots before shooting and the careful formation and composition of individual shots (evident in his own films).

On the positive side, Eisenstein realized rightly that (having begun with the real in the first place) he had to break connection with the

real if cinema was to become an art. For relation to the real, Eisenstein substitutes montage. Montage is a part-whole theory: it concerns the relations of cinematic part and part and part and whole. Thus for relation to the real, that is, relation to something else, Eisenstein substitutes relation to self, relations within self, which is the first condition for art. To speak of part-whole relations is to speak about art. Thus Eisenstein's is a genuine aesthetic theory and a genuine film theory because it concerns the conditions and requirements in which film is art. This is indeed the focus of all Eisenstein's theoretical writings—he is continually drawing parallels and differences between cinema and the other arts, theater, painting, fiction, etc. Thus Eisenstein's is a two-stage film theory, proceeding from the relations of cinema to the real to the relations of cinema with cinema (part and whole). The theory's chief defect is that it defines this nexus, from first to second stage, from reality to art, too narrowly, limiting it to the doctrine of montage.

There remains the question why Eisenstein did not get beyond the sequence. In principle—concerned as he was with part-whole and with cinema as art—he *should* have. And he certainly recognizes the need in his piece on *Potemkin* as tragedy. [What he does not say there is what the tragic apparatus he describes has to do with film, or with the subject of this film. Nor does he convince that this is what unifies the film let alone accounts for its effects.] The answer to the question is perhaps to be found in Eisenstein's intense concern with the *emotional effects* of cinema, specifically of course with the effects of montage; and in his devotion to this factor in his own films. This—the various effects of montage organizations on viewer—seems at times the central category of Eisenstein's aesthetic. As filmmaker and theoretician, Eisenstein was concerned, indeed obsessed, with the closest possible control of the viewer's emotions. His analysis and attention here are literally on a shot-by-shot basis. Now it is obvious that one cannot talk about effects of this precision in regard to whole films. One cannot speak of a

single emotion in *Potemkin*, nor of a single emotional process. They are too many and too complex, even in regard to any of the film's main parts. The precision and control Eisenstein speaks of occur on the local level. To Eisenstein cinematic form means precise ordering of the viewer's emotions and this cannot be conceived or spoken of except for relatively short stretches. Eisenstein is weak on formal wholes because of his commitment to the part-complex (the sequence) as aesthetic center and theoretical focus and because of his concern with absolute emotional control at the local level.

Bazin's is a one-stage film theory. Bazin begins with the real but, unlike Eisenstein, does not go beyond it; he never breaks with the real in the name of art. This severely limits Bazin's theory of film, in a very different way than Eisenstein's starting point limits him; but has implications hardly less odd than those which Eisenstein's position has. For in Bazin, film art is complete, is fully achieved in the shot itself. If the shot stands in proper relation to the real, then it is already art. Indeed, there are for Bazin no higher or more inclusive units or categories of film form and film art. The shot depends on no larger unit nor on combination with other shots for its status as art. Bazin does not get beyond the shot (which may also be a sequence): for his theory it is the beginning and the end of film art. Bazin's theory is a theory of shots and what shots ought to be.

Bazin has no theory of part-whole relation, though one could be extrapolated from his discussions of the shot and sequence. We must recall first that simple linkage is the only connection between shots that Bazin approves—he frowns on expressive editing techniques, that is, on explicit shot relation. If the individual shot exhibits fidelity to the real, then it follows that a series of such shots, merely linked, must be faithful to the real also. Bazin is not concerned with this resultant sum and *its* relation to the real at all. His position seems to be: Be true to the real in each shot and the whole will take care of itself (the whole being the



mere sum of parts). Or perhaps: True parts linked together add up willy-nilly to a true whole. Bazin has no sense (and certainly no doctrine) of the overall formal organization of films. Indeed, one suspects that in Bazin it is the real which is organic, not art—except that art, in this respect as well as others, may reflect the real in its derivative sense, thus have a reflected organic unity. That is, film art has no overall form of its own, but that of the real itself. Bazin has a theory of the real, he may not have an aesthetic.

There is a sense in which Bazin's theory impinges on previous conceptions and practices of part-whole relation, though it does not have a doctrine of part-whole itself. Bazin critiques the montage sequence and substitutes for it the sequence shot. The long take replaces the montage sequence—a part replaces a whole (or complex) of parts. Viewed differently, the long take is itself a whole (at the sequence level) as well as a part (at the overall film level). This part-whole relation Bazin does not consider—the relation or ordering of long takes within the film. In neither Bazin nor Eisenstein is there any carry-over from sequence to sequence or any inter-sequence relation. Also like Eisenstein, Bazin has no theory of whole films. Bazin said how Flaherty should and did shoot the sealhunt sequence in *Nanook*, but he could not say how Flaherty or anyone else did or should shoot and construct whole films.

It is easy to see how Bazin's theoretical substitution of the long take for the montage sequence could have led to a new awareness of the formal organization of whole works and to new theoretical formulations thereof. With far fewer and more conspicuous parts in the overall work, their relation to each other and to the whole becomes at once a simpler matter to conceive and a more difficult one to ignore. Within the hundreds of montage pieces, Eisenstein could shift ground, suggesting now that the entire film is single, continuous montage, now that it is organized carefully into five separate and distinct acts, now that montage pieces go to make up sequences within whole films and within "acts"; but a relatively small

number of long takes call attention to themselves and raise the problem of their mutual relation.

To proceed from the sequence to the whole, however simple a step, was inadmissible for Bazin because the work seen as formal whole rises up against the real, or stands over against it, as a separate and complete totality. To recognize the formal organization of the whole work is to recognize the autonomy of art, its nature as a whole with complex inner relations. The autonomy of the work, its status as a rival totality to the real, was to Bazin literally unthinkable. Hence he downgrades any kind of form except that subservient to the form of the real. Bazin's emphasis on the part, the sequence, serves to keep cinema in a kind of infancy or adolescence, always dependent upon the real, that is, on another order than itself. The real was the only totality Bazin could recognize. His "self-effacement before reality" placed serious limitations on the complexity and ambition of cinematic form.

Our analysis has revealed internal weaknesses in the classical film theories and therefore implicitly criticizes them. This is not, however, a criticism of the theories in relation to their own periods nor even "in themselves"; such operations would be irrelevant to present needs and also unhistorical. Our purpose has been instead a critical review of the theories for their usefulness for the present, conducted from the standpoint of the present, with the goal of helping prepare for new theoretical work.

Overall film organization has been stressed because, in the present, Godard has revealed the possibility (and the achievement) of new kinds of formal cinematic wholes, as well as new kinds of organization at the local level. Thus *One Plus One* is not a tragedy or a Western, it is a montage, that is, a purely cinematic being, organized in purely cinematic ways. (Obviously certain of Godard's other late films present more complicated cases—*Wind From the East* is a Western, as well as a sound-and-visual formal whole.) In these films (as no

doubt others do in other films) Godard raises cinema to a more complex, more total organization, and arguably to a higher stage in its evolutionary development. The classical film theories, for the reasons given above, cannot account for and cannot be stretched or amended to account for (or include) these works. Comparison with the classical theories is nevertheless useful—partly because they are the only models we presently have, partly because such comparison reveals the shortcomings of the older theories and possibly the outlines of a new theory. (We noted that Eisenstein slighted overall formal organization because of his interest in close emotional control of viewer response at the local level. Godard's freedom to create new kinds of formal wholes derives partly from his foregoing such control at the local level and perhaps any certain or preplanned emotional effects whatever. Certainly the postulation of a critical rather than passive audience requires this. Thus Godard's later films are increasingly cerebral, that is, intellectual rather than emotional organizations.)

We began with the need for new theoretical work. Does our analysis of the classical film theories yield any indication of the directions such work should take? Answering such a question goes beyond strict analysis of the theories themselves, that is, how they operate as theories, necessarily bringing in other assumptions, orientations, etc. If our analysis has been accurate, it should be accessible to various aesthetic positions, not just to one. What follows then, our conclusions concerning the classical theories, is separated from what has gone before by the line which divides analysis from preliminary advocacy or synthesis. It seems to me that consideration of reality and relation to reality in Eisenstein and Bazin, and in the senses which they mean, have been a source of serious confusion and even of retardation to theoretical understanding of cinema. It seems to me also that the next period of theoretical effort should concentrate on formulation of better, more complex models and theories of part-whole relations, including sound organiza-

tions as well as all visual styles; and only after this is done, or taken as starting point, proceed to relations with "reality," but not in the Bazinian or Eisensteinian sense of an antecedent reality out of which cinema develops. Finally, the focus of inquiry should be shifted from reality-image interaction to image-viewer interaction, as is being done in other critical disciplines, notably in the psychoanalytic approach to art.

To proceed we must return to our typology of film theories, which may be taken to a further level of generality and abstraction. Behind part-whole theory and relation to the real lie relation-to-self and relation-to-other, the two most fundamental categories in which anything may be considered. Thus part-whole relations include all possible relations of cinema with itself, and relation to the real or other includes all relations of cinema with that outside itself. [Thus our two theory-types are less fortuitously chosen than first appears or—more correctly—since they are the principal theories that have been developed, their appearance and opposition in the history of film thought are more fundamental than first appears.] We no sooner say this than we realize that there can be no choice between them, that these are the two fundamental categories or aspects of the subject, neither of which can be ignored or suppressed. Rather the question is one of the mode of their interrelation, the answer to which will be different at different times and places. In more usual critical terms, this question concerns the relation between intensive criticism and extensive criticism.

In regard to film criticism and film theory (which is, after all, a philosophy of criticism or meta-criticism) at the present, it seems to me that extensive criticism of cinema has been far more developed than intensive criticism. What this imbalance involves is not merely a "catching up." Since the two categories are correlative, that is, dialectically interrelated, it implies that extensive criticism, where unbalanced in this way, has been falsely based. For what *can* relation-to-other mean when relation-to-self, or part-whole relation, has not been

established? We are talking about those critics who hold up a work and read off its social (or moral) meaning at sight, without bothering to reconstruct its formal relations. The place to begin is always with the work itself. Only when the work is comprehended in its complex relations with itself, can relations with anything other be made. If one attempts extensive relations without plumbing the work itself, he is very likely to get the second relation wrong (for works of art, like systems of courts, often reverse themselves at higher levels or organization). At the least one has no basis to suppose himself right. Much more importantly, and fundamentally, he misses *how* it is that a work of art can mean—or stand in any relation to something outside itself—and that is only as a totality, that is, as a complex complete in its own terms. Only a totality can sustain relations with a totality. There are two terms to any extensive relation, the work and its other. Concentrating on this relation itself, extensive critics often ignore or slight the first term. Thoroughgoing part-whole analysis insures that this does not happen.

Eisenstein and Bazin present a special case—one that has not existed in the other arts (and their criticisms) for a long time. They seek to relate cinema to an *antecedent* reality, that is, the reality out of which it develops in becoming art. As we have seen, Eisenstein defines this

nexus very narrowly and Bazin never allows cinema to break with the real at all. It is difficult for me to find any value in this approach whatever: such theories would keep cinema in a state of infancy, dependent upon an order anterior to itself, one to which it can stand in no meaningful relation because of this dependence. We no longer relate a painting by Picasso to the objects he used as models nor even a painting by Constable to its original landscape. Why is the art of cinema different? The answer in terms of “mechanical reproduction” assumes an answer rather than argues one. Similarly from an ideological point of view, only when we begin with the work (rather than with the real as Eisenstein and Bazin do) and establish it fully in its internal relations, that is, as a totality, can we then turn it toward (or upon) the socio-historical totality and oppose the two. (Or rather allow the work itself to oppose.) It is clear that nothing less than a totality can oppose or criticize a totality. It is also clear that something still dependent on reality, indeed still attached to it, can in no sense criticize or oppose it. Only when the work of art is *complete* in its own terms does it break this dependence and take on the capacity for opposition; hence understanding the conditions and kinds of artistic completeness and organization becomes primary for criticism.

## Reviews

### THE WILD CHILD

(*L'Enfant Sauvage*) Directed by François Truffaut. Scenario and dialogue by Truffaut and Jean Gruault, based on the book by Itard. Photography: Nestor Almendros.

*The Wild Child* is based on the memoirs of Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard, a young doctor who took into his charge the child of the title, an 11- or 12-year-old boy captured in a forest in

central France in 1799. Itard, disagreeing with colleagues who believed the child to be mentally defective, obtained funds from the government for a housekeeper to take care of the boy, while he himself saw to his training and education. His efforts of five years are recounted in two memoirs, one written in 1801